

## **Regional Meeting Report #2**

### **Virginia State Preparedness Report (SPR) Project Regional Meeting, Region III Longwood University Farmville, VA; Nov 29, 2007**

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**Project:** A702-025

**Purpose:** The following information is presented in bullet format, by breakout group, without supporting comments and recommendations. The purpose of this report is to provide the program managers with a snapshot of the regions' current accomplishments and capabilities and recommended targets and initiatives for the future.

The comments are presented without attribution to a particular agency or individual.

#### **Enhance Regional Collaboration:**

The Planning and COOP Working Group joined this group.

#### **Current Accomplishments and Capabilities:**

- The group acknowledged that, as a whole, the region is not functioning as a region.
- There are segments of the region that are working well together.
- First responders are well qualified as well as EOCs but above (outside) the EOCs, personnel are not well trained.
- There is a failure in leadership – some senior emergency managers are not experienced and fully trained.
- Emergency preparedness is not a priority and “some managers don’t show up for the meetings” and they don’t understand the NIMS process.

#### **Targets for 2010:**

Enhance the Region’s capability to improve preparedness by:

- Providing more emergency management planning support to the local jurisdictions.
- Enhancing the regional structure and planning districts with full time planning positions.

#### **Steps/Initiatives to reach Targets:**

- Step 1 for 2008 - Commonwealth level emphasis on regional preparedness as a priority – to include resources – “give us staff, not stuff”
- Step 2 for 2009 - Increase staffing levels for planners to improve planning at region, district, and local levels.
- Step 3 for 2010 – Engage leadership and citizens in localities in preparedness programs and increase education, training, and planning activities.

## **Enhance Communication Capabilities:**

Where are we today?

- There is no regional operability. There are 22 jurisdictions (ex: Charlottesville to Halifax)
- Money and state coordination are not in place which is hindering communication.
- No upfront guidelines established
- STARS is overpriced
- We need statewide standards set. 67 ?? just for Roanoke, 800 trunk
- City and county coordination are in place, but not regional coordination.
- Police and Fire are not on the same frequency regionally.
- Police and Fire on the same frequency locally.
- Regional groups are too large to function effectively. Should implement subsets in the region.
- Regionally not there yet. There is no infrastructure in place.
- Subsets looked at from a geographical standpoint or operational standpoint.
- Rural areas will double costs due to their geography – valleys, mountains, etc.

How do you fix it?

- Ham Radios/Amateur Radios
- Enhance voice communication vs data communication. More rural localities don't have high speed internet.
- Establish a satellite link capability – high speed satellite vs land line.
- Set up wireless hot spots with satellite in disaster areas.

Communication with citizens:

- Scanners
- Reverse 911
- Money is an issue.
- Roam Secure – Public notification through the internet. Citizens sign up for all emergency notification.
- Regions may have to be realigned.
- Tetra – Radio System
- Tools, strategies needed.
- Not enough money.
- Alignment of regions/sub regions, overlapping areas
- Region as a whole is not interoperable.
- In 2005 Charlottesville given 18 million dollars for radio systems and 4 million dollars for mobile data systems. This worked with everyday capabilities vs national capabilities.
- Establish caches in each locality.
- Establish private sector input focus groups to involve the city, county and universities.
- Money allocated for research and planning should be in place.
- Money to hire communications consultant to work with each locality/consultant duties: works with each locality, resolution suited for each locality, common

- resolutions – 59% of 911 calls are wireless in Charlottesville. There are two (2) new towers in Charlottesville, costing 1.2 million dollars each.
- Private ambulance companies equipped with radios to communicate with EOC's. 2010 not a realistic timeframe unless money is allocated. Then there is not enough time to have the equipment in place.
- Statewide initiative – Utilize WEB EOC, however, everyone doesn't have high speed internet.

#### Hardware Issues

- Need a realistic timeline to comply internally and externally.
- Identify equipment.
- Enhance training.
- Need for operability across the board.
- Implementation would take at least 4-5 years, one year per jurisdiction.
- If broken down into subsets, the timeline may be conducive to a two (2) year time frame.
- The Federal government has restrictions on certain areas receiving signals.
- There are many independent groups involved.

#### **Enhance CBRNE Detection, Response, and Decontamination:**

##### **Current status and issues:**

- Continue current efforts in the areas of prevention and early detection.
- Capabilities – There is regional focus on identifying locals' immediate needs.
- Grants have helped training and technology.
- Working with UVA for Bio items.
- Limited training.
- Shortage of personnel.
- Departments have equipment that they really don't need.
- Have the capability to handle Police Dept/Fire Dept working together and helped improve communication and training.
- Radios are a problem when they don't work in basic areas.
- Information sharing has improved in localities, but not within the region.
- There is always help within the localities, but resources are still limited.

##### **Targets and Initiatives:**

- Training: Facilitate and include training on relevant issues such as equipment, plans, response and prevention. Consider overtime, back fill, continuity and monitoring service levels.
- Equipment: Develop a plan and implement procedures for support of equipment provided by Grants. Consider training, maintenance, replacement, upgrades, shelf life and management.
- Provide either funding or equipment the first year and provide funding annually to cover the items listed above.
- Review and assess needs at the end of the cycle – three (3) year or five (5) year.
- Response: Define and implement the level of service provided regionally for HAZMAT, EOD, USAR, etc.

- Identify what the response time will be.
- Once the above is completed, survey the localities within the region and provide (build) the resources locally to support an initial two (2) hour response without regional support.
- Build a greater (better) information sharing capability – a regional Fusion Center.
- Train personnel/citizens about indicators and who to notify.
- Grants – A separate line item for maintenance.
- There is a need for updating basic equipment since 2001.
- Need for more decontamination items.
- Enhance training.
- Increase staffing.
- Focus on equipment that can be used for multiple purposes.
- Define locality and what they can have done until they get help from the state.
- There is a gap they would like to have filled by the state in the areas of when help will arrive, what's appropriate and to what extent.
- Would like to see a shorter response time.
- Need for re-supply of radios, sensors, gas masks (filters, canisters).
- Enhance information flow to the right agencies.
- Prevention – It is not known for sure what other cities, localities have available for other Departments to use.
- Need for multi jurisdictional coordination.
- Need to develop a plan for training.
- Enhance equipment training.
- Need for training management.
- Enhance training of personnel and citizens in the area of early detection.

#### **Enhance Planning and COOP:**

This working group, with two participants, joined the Regional Collaboration group.

#### **Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, and Mass Care (Shelter and Feeding):**

##### **Current status and issues:**

- More information, planning and coordination are needed to conduct shelter in place for more than 48 hrs. This includes personnel, evacuation routes and support logistics for emergency response units.
- Accommodating pets, disabled, displaced and children during evacuation, shelter in place, mass care. Social services can't accommodate these now. The region needs to commit to and expand the capabilities of social services.
- The region needs to think about how to accommodate the citizens of the region once they have been evacuated.

#### **Questions for Working Group:**

1. Since 2002 what do you feel has been accomplished in your region related to preparing citizens for staying in place during an emergency and to provide shelter, food, or others services for those who must evacuate their home?
  - Identified local shelters
  - Once a month the emergency coordinator has a television segment discussing emergency plans on a local station in Charlottesville sponsored by State Farm
  - Senior citizens are educated at senior citizen centers about emergencies, evacuation, and shelter in place
  - A website exists at the ECC (local 911)
  - A website and training in CERT (community emergency response team) has been created to teach, educate, and train in shelter in place, evac, and mass care.
  - Routes and highways have been identified for evacuation and re-routing
2. What are examples of the results of these accomplishments in your region? In your locality?
  - Visited the shelters to make sure they could accommodate the community
  - Worked in coordination with other agencies and developed personal relationships
  - Identified the right people in various departments in key positions
  - Have more knowledge about who is responsible during emergencies
  - Increased training in sheriffs department and police department
  - Increased education in community (region)
3. What objectives should be established to further citizen evacuation planning and readiness across your region by 2010?
  - Complete evacuation and shelter plan for VA (need to go beyond region III)
  - Concentrate on spillovers from other regions
  - Identify additional equipment, where to store the equipment and money for the equipment
  - Expand communication campaign
  - Hire/ attain/ assign full time emergency coordinators
4. What steps need to be taken to accomplish each objective?
  - Complete evacuation and shelter plan for VA (need to go beyond region III)
  - Concentrate on spillovers from other regions
  - Train and exercise evacuation and shelter in place annually (state and local officials) including pets
  - Organize efforts to complete plan and prioritize commitments.
  - Continue development of transportation plans for evacuation
  - Continue assessing and identifying shelters
  - a. Identify additional equipment, where to store the equipment and money for the equipment
    - i. Decide where and what equipment is important for extended periods of time by bringing stakeholders together
    - ii. Train and exercise evacuation and shelter in place annually (state and local officials) including pets
    - iii. Tabletop exercises to increase awareness and needs

- iv. Estimate cost of equipment by full time evacuation logistics personnel
  - v. Coordinate with local and private agencies to store additional equipment
  - vi. Develop memorandum of understanding MOU's with transportation companies to distribute equipment to targeted shelters
- b. Expand communication campaign
  - i. Increase communication and target non-English speaking citizens
  - ii. Continue CERT recruitment and training
  - iii. Target faith based community to spread information about evacuation and shelter in place
- c. Hire/ attain/ assign full time emergency coordinators
  - i. Create job descriptions and advertise internally and externally
  - ii. Educate coordinators and require coordinators to liaison with other agencies.

**Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution:**

There were no participants for this working group.